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SUBJECT: UKRAINIAN RADA SPEAKER YATSENYUK OUSTED

Classified By: Ambassador William Taylor for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

SUMMARY

1. (C) Rada speaker Yatsenyuk was ousted during a fractious parliamentary session on November 12, which included two legally questionable votes and a physical confrontation between MPs. The Party of Regions, Lytvyn Bloc, Communist party and a handful of Our Ukraine-People's Self Defense bloc MPs joined forces to alter Rada procedural rules and remove Yatsenyuk. A scuffle occurred between Party of Regions and Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc MPs when the latter tried to shut down the Rada's electronic voting system to prevent the vote against Yatsenyuk. Speculation in the Rada is rife over the end goal of removing Yatsenyuk, but it is clear that most MPs are not privy to the decisions being made by their party leaders. END SUMMARY.

QUESTIONABLE VOTES AND A SCUFFLE

2. (U) After a routine morning recess on November 12, Deputy Speaker and Party of Regions MP Oleksandr Lavrynovych called a snap vote on suspending Rada Speaker Arseniy Yatsenyuk for two plenary sessions for alleged procedural violations during the October 31 vote on anti-crisis/IMF legislation. The suspension resolution was not included on the Rada agenda as required by parliamentary rules. 231 MPs voted to suspend Yatsenyuk, including 175 from Party of Regions (Regions), 27 from the Communist Party, 20 from the Lytvyn Bloc, 8 MPs from Our Ukraine-People's Self-Defense (OU-PSD), and 1 from the Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc (BYuT).

3. (U) After Yatsenyuk's suspension, BYuT MPs tried to stop any further voting in the Rada by occupying and shutting down the electronic voting system. Regions MPs, led by Nestor Shufrych, broke down two doors and pushed out the BYuT MPs occupying the voting control system. After a short recess to reboot the voting system, MPs then voted to change the Rada's rules on removing Yatsenyuk. The new procedure allowed a vote using electronic voting cards rather than secret paper ballots specified in Rada regulations that require deputies to be present to vote. A vote the previous evening using the required paper ballots failed because while many Regions MPs voting cards were registered in the chamber, they were not personally present to pick up their ballots. In the subsequent vote using the electronic voting cards, all of Regions, Communist, and Lytvyn Bloc MPs voted along with 10 OU-PSD and 1 BYuT MP to remove Yatsenyuk as speaker. The session ended without a vote on Yatsenyuk's replacement, although Regions told the press that they will nominate Lavrynovych to fill the Speaker's chair. Former Rada Speaker and MP Volodymyr Lytvyn and OU-PSD MP Ivan Plyush are also being mentioned as possible successors.

SPECULATION, BUT DEPUTIES IN THE DARK

¶4. (C) Rumors about the true reason for Yatsenyuk's ouster and what, if any, role President Yushchenko played are rife in the Rada corridors. Many MPs were willing to share with us their theories of why Yatsenyuk was dismissed, but none claimed to know the definite reasons for his removal. BYuT MPs Andrei Shkil and Valeri Pisarenko told us that they believe Yatsenyuk's removal had Yushchenko's blessing and is a prelude to either a new push for early elections or a legally questionable coalition between some part of OU-PSD, Regions and Lytvyn Bloc. Regions MPs Yuriy Miroshnuchenko and Volodymyr Makayenko told us that this is the beginning of an attempt to form a coalition between a Regions and OU-PSD. OU-PSD MP Kyrylo Kuliko and BYuT MP Konstantin Bondarayev speculated to us that Yushchenko pushed Yatsenyuk's dismissal in an attempt to weaken any authority not controlled by the President. Regions MP Bondarenko countered the speculation over possible coalition building or early elections, telling us that Yatsenyuk's removal was because he altered an amendment to the anti-crisis/IMF legislation from the version voted on by the Rada. Despite the willingness of MPs to share their theories, Makayenko told us that Regions MPs were not informed why they should vote for Yatsenyuk's ouster, but all fell in line because none wanted to jeopardize their chance of being included on the party list if a new election is called.

COMMENT

¶5. (C) While the end goal of Yatsenyuk's dismissal is unclear, his removal further destabilizes the political situation in Kyiv. Yatsenyuk was an effective Speaker. His absence will allow more maneuverability for those in the Rada wanting to either push through legislation facilitating early elections or the creation of a legally questionable coalition between some part of OU-PSD, Regions and Lytvyn.

¶6. (U) Visit Embassy Kyiv's classified website:
www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev.
TAYLOR